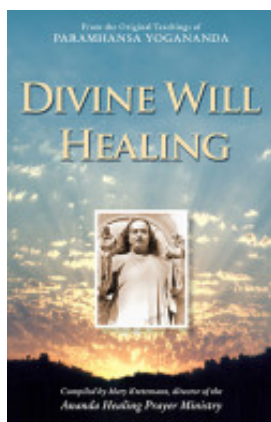


Psalm 23 in the Chakras

by Mary Kretzmann

Excerpted from the book, **Divine Will Healing**



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Memorizing the 23rd Psalm and using it as both an affirmation and [visualization](#) offers great inspiration. Years ago, Swami Kriyananda explained that this psalm is about the astral spine, and the process of the divine energy awakening within us. He mentioned that the "rod and staff" symbolize the spine itself, and the "cup runneth over" is about the kundalini, once re-united with the crown chakra, spilling abundantly over one's whole being. When that union is permanently established, we are liberated and "dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

I have always sensed that this beautiful psalm held deep, hidden power. Indeed, I have heard intriguing stories of divine protection it has given to people in times of intense danger. I had a

desire to understand it more deeply, for I sensed I would then be able to draw from its well of strength, and this would help me in my service through the Healing Prayer Ministry.

In March of 2000, Swami Kriyananda came back to Ananda Village for a visit, after having lived at Ananda Europa in Assisi, Italy for the two previous years. He has a very expansive aura and many of us felt immediate silent spiritual benefit upon his return. I wanted to ask Swamiji to explain the psalm more fully, but I felt that I must first try to understand it as deeply as possible through meditation and intuition. The first night that he was back at Ananda Village, I awoke in the middle of the night thinking of this psalm, and it struck me that the psalmist starts off by addressing the Shepherd as "He" and then, midway through the psalm, switches to the much more personal "Thou". I knew I had stumbled upon a major clue, yet I didn't know what to make of it.

I went to my altar and repeated the psalm with deep concentration for about 15 – 20 minutes. Suddenly the veil lifted and I understood the psalm clearly. I realized that it addresses each of the chakras. I found great inspiration silently repeating the psalm while thinking of each energy center in the spine.

Previously, I had to concentrate fully to remember the correct sequence when saying this psalm, because the pieces didn't seem to flow together in a sensible way. However, once I had this insight into the inner meaning of the psalm, I found that suddenly it made perfect sense, and one line flowed naturally into the next.

I believe the 23rd Psalm has served as a source of strength for many people for thousands of years because it addresses the inner process of Self-realization. Below is a visualization exercise using the psalm in a deep way, moving up the spine chakra by chakra. [This 23rd Psalm visualization has been immensely powerful in some private healing sessions.](#) It helps the "patient" to sense the astral spine as a tangible aspect of his or her personal soul journey.

(Listen to Mary Kretzmann guide you through a 20 minute visualization of Psalm 23 in the chakras)

The Lord is my shepherd.

See Him standing before you. Place your trust in Him. Feel His presence within you and around you.

This first line opens us to the foundation of devotion in this psalm. The operative word here is "Lord". This line becomes more deeply clarified when we consider that there are other "shepherds" one might be tempted to stray toward in moments of confusion. This line is about choosing God: to follow Him, and to unite with Him in your Soul.

I shall not want.

Feel Him in your spine. Realize that you want nothing that is outside of His will for you.

The aspiring saint casts aside all lesser desires to focus full attention and willingness on finding God alone. We find this level of commitment expressed throughout this psalm.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

Feel Him keeping watch over you as you rest on the green, abundant earth. Absorb the radiant life force. Feel the support of the solid earth. All is well.

- First chakra—at the tailbone; the earth element, and issues of survival; supplies energy to the legs and eliminative organs.

This passage creates such a wonderful image of being cared for and sustained by the Lord. The sheep is secure as the shepherd keeps watch over his needs, keeping him safe. "Except that ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

See the clear water of a beautiful mountain lake, reflective, cool and still. Rest. Reflect.

- Second chakra—at the sacrum; the water element; creative impulse, sexual energy; sexual organs.

This "still water" is fresh, clear water—not lifeless stagnation. This image is about transmuting the sexual energy into something exalted, rare and beautiful.

Remembering that this psalm is about the inner spine, it is helpful to ask, "How can I keep myself sensitively aware of this divine energy flowing in the center of my being?" and, "What would give beautiful, refreshing beauty to the sexual and creative impulse?"

Everything is relative. Varying degrees of stillness can be experienced in how one handles the sex force. When an individual becomes fixated on sensual desire there enters a great restlessness and loss of soul quality. For the person who has tended toward shallow and fleeting love affairs, it would be a huge step toward inner stillness to simply make a deep commitment to "love, honor and cherish" one beloved in the name of God.

The physical expression of love is an important, tender connection for many couples. It is often best, then, to focus on bringing in greater love, and lessening any sense of lust in the act, rather than to become radical and "renounce" it all prematurely, in the name of spiritual zeal. As a married couple learn the balance between sexual expression and inner stillness, great love can deepen between them, if they are mindful also to find other ways to express their purified love for each other, lest they become too austere. Be deeply kind to one another, always. Seeing the Divine Beloved enshrined in one another's forms, the couple can both give and receive deeper love. In this way, love can, over time, be transmuted from the second chakra up to the heart center. This process must proceed with self-honesty and compassionate consideration toward the need of the beloved and of oneself.

The soul is felt in deep inner quiet. "Be still and know that I am God." The most profound example of this "still water" is seen in the saint who has transmuted the physical longing altogether, inwardly merging his or her heart's love with the Divine.

At whatever point a person finds himself on this continuum, he can move toward that center of stillness and divinity within, thus allowing the energy to rise to the higher centers and restoring the soul nature.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Feel divine strength at the navel area, radiating all through the abdomen. Feel that as you use your determination to follow divine will, it creates a pathway within you to reach the higher

realities.

- Third chakra—at the navel; fire element; “fiery self control” giving the ability to follow rules for spiritual living; self-discipline; feeds abdominal organs

The soul is “restored” as we live in alignment with spiritual truth. Spiritual guidelines help us to avoid major pitfalls that might take us away from our soul nature.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.

Visualize a glowing ball of Light in your heart; with each breath increase its radiance, and try to feel the warmth emanating from it. Invite the Divine Presence to dwell in your heart, always. Visualize Divine Mother, or one of the Masters living in your heart, radiating divine love, guidance and protection.

- Fourth chakra—at the heart; Air element; Human and Divine love; feeds the heart, lungs, arms and hands

Note that the psalmist has moved from addressing God in the third person to the more endearing, personal relationship of “I and Thou.” It is a crucial part of spiritual evolution to move beyond merely following God’s laws, to loving Him purely within one’s heart. (“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength and thy neighbor as thyself.”) When we feel the indwelling Lord in our hearts, it gives us true courage and we can face great difficulties with calmness. Indeed, there is nothing to fear, for even if death comes, the devotee knows that nothing is lost, for the soul is united with God through the heart’s love. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

One of the most important elements in spiritual healing is opening the heart to God. First a person needs to feel he is a child of God and can receive His love, casting aside any issues of unworthiness or fear. (“Perfect love casteth out all fear.”) From there he or she can begin to express gratitude to God for life’s myriad blessings, and most profoundly, for the love of God felt in the heart.

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Feel the breath moving in the throat; begin to feel that this current of breath is related to the current in the astral spine.

- Fifth chakra; at the throat, ether element: Calmness; feeds the throat and voice

The neck is the narrowest part of the body, consisting only of the spine and the throat, making it is easier to tune into the spinal currents there. The breath and spine are pathways to feel God’s presence and calmness.

When we are living in alignment with higher truth, the flow of energy in the spine reminds us of our divine nature and is a comfort to us, no matter if the outward drama is disturbing.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Focus deeply at the point between the eyebrows (even knit the eyebrows together if that helps you). Feel your devotion rise to that point.

- Sixth chakra, at the spiritual eye (the point between the eyebrows); divine will and intuition; pathway to enlightenment

In all of life, there exists a bountiful table set before us, the spiritual eye. If we focus there deeply, we are invited to dine with the Lord, in his Light. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light." This light feeds the whole body, and it is there for us no matter if the "enemies" we face are our own lower tendencies, or outer difficulties.

This line can be paraphrased, "Though my enemies of doubt and desire and delusion still surround me, the light of the third eye instantly recharges my body when I offer myself there."

Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Visualize the Divine pouring grace upon you, and your being fills with light, spilling out over the crown chakra.

- Seventh chakra; at the top of the head; the crown chakra; thousand petaled lotus; union with the Divine.

The Lord touches us with His grace ("Thou anointest my head with oil") bringing the state of samadhi ("my cup runneth over"). As the energy passes through the spiritual eye and unites with the crown chakra, the energy spills out over one's head and being. It may stop at this point (samadhi of the body) or it may expand into the full samadhi of cosmic consciousness.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Feel the grace of divine protection and goodness, and the willingness to cooperate with that grace.

On the deepest level this stanza represents the ultimate goal of the spiritual path. If this union is permanent, we are fully reunited with God and need "go no more out." We dwell in the house of the Lord forever, never leaving His presence again. (This is *Nirbikalpa samadhi*.) It is helpful to affirm and aspire toward this highest state, reminding us of our divine birthright; for as we think, so we become.

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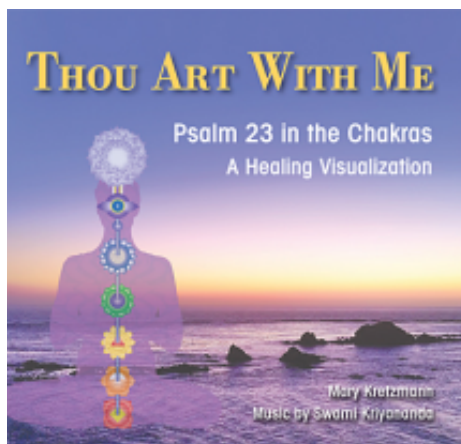
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